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MN012301. Hospital Corps Celebrates 103rd Birthday
By Aveline Allen, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
World-wide - There are 26,000 Navy and Naval Reserve corpsmen
world-wide, all of whom provide dedicated medical service and aid
to Marines and Sailors whenever and wherever needed.

"Hospital Corpsmen have always maintained the health of their
shipmates and Marines with unwavering dedication and continue to do
so," said HMCM(SW) Mark Weldon, Force Master Chief for Navy
Medicine.

Navy Surgeon General James R. Tryon was the first who
suggested the idea of establishing an "organized hospital corps,"
defined as "a professional, well-trained group of individuals to
provide medical care for the Navy." After years of lobbying on
Tryon's part, in 1898, Congress approved a bill establishing the
Navy's long-needed corps.

Since then, hospital corpsmen have repeatedly distinguished
themselves on the battlefield with the Marines and SEALs, aboard
surface ships and submarines, at military healthcare facilities
world-wide; deploying with Seabees, with diving and aviation units,
and aiding victims of natural and man-made disasters. The Navy
Hospital Corps continues to serve around the globe in widely
diverse roles, always standing by, ready to assist.

"Few military organizations can look upon their histories with
the same degree of pride as the Hospital Corps. I encourage each
corpsman to take time to reflect on their proud and distinguished
heritage and to continue to meet those high standards," Weldon
said. "Operational readiness, training to requirements and
leadership have and continue to be our goals and objectives for the
Hospital Corps of the 21st century."

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MN012302. DoD Further Slows Anthrax Vaccination Effort

The Department of Defense (DoD) will further slow its Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program (AVIP). This further AVIP slowdown is due to a shortage of FDA-released vaccine. This action is consistent with the vaccination program's previously announced plan to do so if the supply was not increased.

This further slowing limits immunizations to personnel in designated special mission units, anthrax vaccine research, and congressionally mandated studies, including collaborative projects with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This slowdown provides for a small reserve of FDA-released vaccine in the event of an emergency. Actions are being taken to ensure that personnel deployed to high-threat areas have sufficient antibiotics on hand for post exposure treatment in case of an attack. As in previous program slowdowns, other individuals will defer anthrax vaccinations until adequate vaccine supplies exist to reinstate the AVIP.

This move is necessary to conserve available vaccine supply while protecting those servicemembers at greatest risk. DoD's Joint Program Office for Biologic Defense is working with the vaccine contractor in an effort to release vaccine by the first quarter of calendar year 2002.

Anthrax remains the top biological warfare threat to U.S. troops. Vaccination is the safest and most reliable way to protect servicemembers from a potential threat that is 99 percent lethal to unprotected, untreated individuals. DoD has vaccinated more than 511,000 servicemembers with more than two million doses of anthrax vaccine since March 1998.

More information about the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program is at www.anthrax.osd.mil.

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MN012303. Armed Services Blood Bank Center Opens At NNMCC

By JO2 Ellen Maurer, NNMCC Bethesda

Bethesda, MD - National Naval Medical Center (NNMCC) Bethesda opened the doors this week to the Armed Services Blood Bank Center (ASBBC), a tri-service collection and distribution blood bank for military treatment facilities in the Washington, DC area.

The decision to combine Army, Navy/Marine Corps and Air Force blood collection and distribution efforts was based upon a "one team, one manager" concept. NNMCC was chosen as the location for the clinic because of its successful record with FDA inspections.

"We found that combining our clinics would be more cost-effective, in terms of manpower and supplies," said ASBBC Director LCDR Jean Scherrer, MSC. "By allowing one clinic to control the distribution of all the blood products to a region, we would cut down on amount of donations that get wasted at one place because of overstock and, at the same time, make sure another hospital didn't run short. It's a win-win situation."

Healthcare professionals from the Navy, Air Force and Army

will staff the ASBBC clinic. Scherrer said the multi-service atmosphere is working out well.

"When it comes down to it, we all share the same goal - saving lives."

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MN012304. Hospital Corpsman Saves WW II Vet

Remsen, NY - Like so many on Memorial Day, HM2 Mitchell Weaver, a Naval Reservist, joined the citizenry in the town's pavilion to listen to the speeches honoring those who served and gave their lives in service to their country.

But before the speeches could even begin, a member of the honor guard, a 78 year old World War II veteran, collapsed, falling backward and hitting his head first on the edge of a picnic table and then on the cement floor.

Weaver leaped around the table, checking for a pulse and breathing. Finding neither, he began CPR.

Over the next several minutes, others took turns assisting Weaver with his lifesaving support, but he never stopped his efforts. Finally, rescue workers brought a defibrillator, administering electroshock to the heart to get it beating again.

The veteran is recovering at a local hospital.

Bob Fullwood, who witnessed the incident, was full of praise for the corpsman.

"Petty Officer Weaver's medical knowledge, willingness to assume risk, and fierce determination to continue to perform CPR when there were no vital signs for such a long time - all those factors saved (the veteran's) life," wrote Fullwood.

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MN012305. USS CARTER HALL Docs Become Surface Warriors

By JO1 Ronald D. Inman, USS CARTER HALL

At Sea - When you think back to history's great naval heroes, phrases such as "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" and "I have not yet begun to fight!" come to mind. But how about, "Say aaahhh," and "Go ahead and rinse"?

While they may not yet have performed such heroic deeds as Admiral David Farragut or John Paul Jones, LT Byron Humble, MC, and LT Nicole Jane, DC, on board USS CARTER HALL (LSD-50), have something in common with those legendary Sailors who paved the way for our Navy - they are Surface Warriors.

LTs Humble and Jane recently earned their Surface Warfare Medical Department Officer (SWMDO) designations, having their insignia pinned on by CARTER HALL's Commanding Officer CDR Edward Delaney.

"I'm proud to be recognized as a member of the medical surface warfare community through the SWMDO qualification," said Humble, a general duty medical officer and CARTER HALL crewmember since June 1999. "Although I can't claim the knowledge of a SWO (Surface Warfare Officer), my work toward the qualification has given me a much greater appreciation for the level of skill, knowledge and professionalism that is required of a Surface Warfare Officer."

According to Jane, who has practiced general dentistry for CARTER HALL'S Sailors and Marines since July 1999, the sacrifice of virtually all her free time to study for her qualification was worth it.

"As a dentist, the pin benefits me because it shows that I have been to sea and actually understand what goes on in this part of the Navy," said Jane.

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MN012306. Portsmouth Staff and Cancer Survivors Celebrate Life

By JO2 Duke Richardson, NMC Portsmouth

Portsmouth, VA - Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and patients who fought cancer and won celebrated National Cancer Survivor's Day with a party for staff, patients and family members.

"This day celebrates life and the people who have been affected by cancer," said LT Irene Henney, NC, of NMC Portsmouth's same-day chemotherapy unit. "Anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer is a survivor."

Brigitte Herrell, a two-year cancer survivor and former patient at NMC Portsmouth, spoke at the event. She said that support from family and friends played a vital role in helping her get through her illness.

"You never realize how many people love and care about you and how many friends you have until something like this happens," she said. "It really helps you pull through."

Herrell stressed that while she had ups and downs over the last two years, some remarkable good has come from her experience. It made her feel closer to her loved ones than ever before.

National Cancer Survivor's Day is a celebration of people who have had or continue to live with a diagnosis of cancer. It is an annual, nationwide celebration of life, which is held in more than 700 communities. Participants from coast to coast unite in a symbolic event honoring the 8.9 million Americans who are surviving cancer.

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MN012307. This Month In Navy Medicine History

- June 1, 1798, 203 years ago, John Wall signed on aboard the frigate USS CONSTELLATION, as the Navy's first loblolly boy. Loblolly boys were the forerunners of today's modern Hospital Corpsman.

- June 8, 1962, 39 years ago, a medical team from Naval Hospital, Bethesda, MD; (today's National Naval Medical Center Bethesda), Naval Medical Research Institute, Bethesda, MD; and the Naval Preventive Medicine Unit No. 2, Norfolk, VA, went to San Pedro Sula, Honduras to fight an epidemic of gastroenteritis.

- June 16, 1965, 36 years ago, the Navy plans for the reactivation of the hospital ship USNS REPOSE. It becomes the first ship activated for the Vietnam Conflict.

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MN012308. SECNAV's Official Portrait Available

The portrait of Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England is available on the internet at www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/people/secnav/secnavpg.html.

In high resolution, the downloadable file is 4.9 MGs. The Secretary's bio is also available at this site.

The secretary was sworn in on May 24.

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MN012309. HealthWatch: Don't Tempt That Mosquito!

By Nicole Deaner, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Almost anyone can relate to having an evening ruined by pesky mosquitoes. It's difficult to enjoy yourself while swatting at mosquitoes and scratching bites.

It is possible to lessen the aggravation caused by mosquitoes by finding out what they're after and what you can do to make yourself less tempting to them.

Mosquitoes breed in swamps, ponds and debris that hold water. The female mosquitoes are the biters. She finds a host, both people and animals, to extract a blood meal to nourish her eggs.

Within hours of extracting a full blood meal, the female mosquito lays her eggs, up to 300 at a time, and the process starts all over again. The eggs hatch into larvae that live in water and come up to the surface to breathe. Larvae develop into pupae in about 7 to 10 days. The pupae develop in the water from one day to a few weeks, then break out of their skin as an adult mosquito, ready to spoil your picnic.

Because of its warm, moist climate and many retaining ponds, one part of the country that is ideal for the mosquito is Florida.

"Rainy periods-summer and fall in Florida-are the worst time for mosquitoes," said CAPT Bob Raspa, MC, head of Naval Hospital Jacksonville's family practice training program. "Extra anti-mosquito precautions are necessary during peak mosquito season."

Besides being annoying, mosquitoes can carry diseases. In regions such as Africa and South Asia, mosquitoes can carry parasites that cause malaria, or viruses such as yellow fever, encephalitis and dengue fever.

In the United States, the recent threat of encephalitis, caused by the West Nile virus, has concerned people across the country, particularly in the Northeastern states. The virus can cause a variety of flu-like symptoms, but can also cause encephalitis. The virus is particularly dangerous to older people or those with weakened immune systems. It hasn't become a public health hazard yet - the threat of being infected is very slight - but it's wise to protect yourself as much as possible.

"I am unaware of any cases of West Nile encephalitis in this area, but every fall, we have cases of other types of encephalitis in the Jacksonville area," said Raspa. "And all types of encephalitis are more devastating to infants and the elderly."

One way of making yourself less attractive to mosquitoes is to slather on the repellent. Sprays and lotions confuse insects by interfering with the receptor cells on mosquito antennae. The chemical smells that your skin normally emits never reach the

mosquito's brain.

DEET (diethyltoluamide) is the active ingredient in most insect repellent. The higher the percentage of DEET in a product, the longer lasting the protection. Raspa recommends DEET concentrations of at least 25 percent for maximum protection. If your skin is DEET-sensitive, a good natural alternative is citronella oil.

Here are some other hints to keep mosquitoes away:

- Mosquitoes are drawn to warm skin and sweat. Stay cool by wearing loose clothing that covers your body, making it difficult for them to bite. Your clothing should also be sprayed with repellent.

- If water sits outside for too long, it becomes stagnant and provides ideal conditions for mosquitoes to lay eggs. Changing birdbath water and kiddie pool water several times a week will keep the water from becoming a stagnant breeding ground.

- Mosquitoes are more aggressive at night. They also like to hide in shady areas like hedges and tall grass. Children should avoid dark areas, like underneath the porch or deck, as it serves as a retreat for mosquitoes that are desperately trying to avoid the hot afternoon sun.

- Mosquitoes are poor fliers. Good air circulation in your yard or porch can discourage them. Remove any obstacles in your yard, such as a trellis, that will block breezes flowing through your yard or patio. Raspa also recommends electric fans.

- If you're traveling abroad to a malaria-infested region, bug spray and long sleeves is not adequate protection. Be sure to check with your doctor to protect yourself against malaria and other parasites.

"You may need preventive medication, or even vaccinations, to prevent diseases carried by mosquitoes" cautioned Raspa. "You'll still need long sleeves and insect repellent, because some diseases carried by mosquitoes, like encephalitis and dengue, have no treatment."

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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News (MEDNEWS) is a weekly compendium of news and information contributed by commands throughout the Navy medical department.

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